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Effect of Students' Anxiety on their Achievement in Mathematics at Grade X in Punjab

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore anxiety and achievement in mathematics of the students at secondary level in Punjab, Pakistan. Study was descriptive in nature and survey method was considered for data collection. More than nineteen hundred students participated in study. Two types of tools were administered for quantitative data collection Achievement Test and Mathematics anxiety scale. After data collection frequencies, means and standard deviations, t-test and ANOVA were calculated. Correlation of mathematics anxiety with the achievement of the students was calculated. Gender wise locality wise, area wise and sector wise analysis was done. The achievement score of male female students, rural and urban students, public and private school students were also compared, and findings were made accordingly. It was concluded that achievement score was less where anxiety was more and vice versa. Anxiety was dominant in male, urban and public sector students. Achievement score was prevailing in female, rural and private students. It is recommended to arrange refresher courses for the teachers, establishment of mathematics labs and regular visits to industrial areas for practical applications of mathematics.

Keywords: Mathematics Anxiety, Achievement, Science and Technology, STEM fields,

1. INTRODUCTION

Mathematics has capability to integrate whole from the part (Emanet, 2021). Numerical problem solving education have attained special importance in the field of science technology (Hassan, Gimba, & Chado, 2016). Pakistani education system has multiple levels higher secondary, secondary, middle and at primary from nursery to intermediate (Ciss, 2019). Numeric fluency and applications of mathematics cover all fields of life including Agriculture, medicine and space technology (Hodanova, 2016). Weak conceptual back ground in arithmetic operations is main cause of low interest of students in science and technology subjects (Gimba, Hassan, Yaki, & Chado, 2018). Companies and firms recruited their employees from all communities without discrimination of race and color (Shrestha & Heisler, 2011). Basic calculation knowledge is necessary for the problem-solving capability among students (Hamidah, 2022). Quality education in mathematics produce skilled workforce for science and technology (Hodanova, 2016). Ability to learn mathematics is

different for individuals (Virgana, 2019). Teachers' prior knowledge regarding use of technology is proved to be very helpful while teaching modern skills related to digital skills (Hirsh, 2020). STEM fields means the fields related to science, mathematics, engineering and mathematics (Koonce, 2011). Mathematics is language of symbols and have attained universal identity to solve real life problems (Parker Waller, 2016). Poor result of mathematics can influence overall result of the students (Bramlett & Herron, 2009). Weak concepts or negative class room experience of students in junior classes resulted in reduced number of students in higher classes (Amer, 2017). Students which are unsatisfied in mathematics classrooms develop mathematics anxiety (Rameli, et al., 2014). There is inverse relationship between mathematics anxiety and achievement of students (Rizwan & Mahmood, 2010).

1.1 Rationale for the Study

Mathematics is language of science and technology (Bosman, 2018). Basic numeracy skills play major role in providing services to society (Cemen, 1987). Basic proficiency in mathematical skills can be helpful to engage students for modern knowledge (Bhatnagar & Saxena, 2000). Uneven learning process and environment develops anxiety (Bursal, 2006). Poor achievement in calculation is a great problem (Cohen, Ibrahim & Allen, 2017). Poor understanding of mathematics cause mathematics anxiety (Mangi & Hussain, 2018). Stake holders in developed countries have done good efforts pre-service trainings of pedagogy, technology standards, students monitoring and evaluation (Hirsh, 2020). In Pakistan students feel anxiety in solving mathematics problems related to Algebra, Analytical Geometry, Trigonometry, and word problems (Naveed, 2016). Some administrative factors are also involved which limit achievement of students in mathematics (Naveed, 2016). For optimistic and operative classroom involvements development an e-learning system which can facilitate mathematics students to address the misconceptions in basic mathematics (Amer, 2017).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were developed for the study:

1. To compare students' anxiety and achievement in mathematics of students by gender (male/female), locality (urban/rural), and type of the school (public/ private).
2. To suggest measures to reduce anxiety.

1.3 Research Questions

Consistent with the objectives, the study was driven by following research questions:

1. Do the students feel mathematics anxiety?
2. Is mathematics anxiety accountable for affecting achievement of students?

1.4 Statement of the Study

Economic growth of developing countries depend upon mathematics fluency of the students (Anyamene, 2022). Teachers are practicing outdated ways of teaching mathematics (Ali, 2010). Students and teachers need to read, write, and speak about mathematics and its symbols (Sheerazi, 2000). Basic numeracy skill can mature critical thinking of students for solving real life problems. (Ali, 2010). Calculation fluency can be used to develop critical thinking (Dowker, 2016). Number of problems are still to be addressed in Pakistan, like deficiency of teacher's trainings, non-utilization of mathematics software, lack of human and material resources, overcrowded classrooms, lack of interest of students and teachers, very rare students' visits of industries to see applications of applied mathematics (Naveed, 2016). Less use of modern technologies and above stated factors create anxiety and reduce achievement of students in exams (Margoum, 2022).

1.3 Review of Related Literature

Mathematics anxiety is a feeling of fear, nervousness, tension in performing various mathematical operations (Cemen, 1987). Problem solving method can increase achievement and decrease anxiety (Rizwan & Mahmood, 2010). Negative experience in mathematics class room give rise mathematics anxiety among students (Rameli, et al., 2014). Mathematics

anxiety might be a factor in the selection of friends, students with mathematics anxiety get close to those who helped these students (Kesici, 2019). Student-centered teaching practices had a positive and significant effect on the student's mathematics achievement (Emanet, 2021). Misconceptions in one lesson of mathematics can affect other lesson, this raise difficulty level of next lesson so mis concepts in lessons needed to be addressed at once. Misconceptions or low understanding of concepts in mathematics hinder mathematics learning of student and become a factor of mathematics anxiety (Amer, 2017). Teaching strategies and uncontrolled learning environment create mathematics anxiety (Atoyebi, 2022). High mathematics anxiety at middle standard hinders in taking mathematics higher grade (Virgana, 2019). Tutors and mentor can play a key role in reducing anxiety of the students through modern ways of delivering knowledge to the students. (Rizwan & Mahmood, 2010). Rigid approach of the teacher can increase mathematics anxiety of the students (Mangi & Hussain, 2018).

Rote memory reduces active participation of the students in mathematics class rooms and using refrain students from building new concepts (Emanet, 2021). Many pre-service teachers brought some experience with technology into institute which may include word processing, gaming, and social media (Hirsh, 2020). Quality teaching can reduce mathematics anxiety (Hodanova, 2016).

Weak background of math teachers enhances anxiety of the students (Gimba, Hassan, Yaki, & Chado, 2018). Numeracy unease can affect every aspect of one's life (Kesici, 2019). Addition of daily life problems in mathematics curriculum reduce cramming support critical thinking among the student's (Reys, Lindquist, Lambdin & Smith, 2007). Progressive, tension free and friendly environment should be created by mathematics teachers for reducing student's anxiety in mathematics (Atoyebi, 2022). Teacher could facilitate shortest solution procedures (Sheerazi, 2000). Proper use of technology can resolve misunderstanding (Amer, 2017). Trained teacher produced good achievement score or students (Vania & Xin, 2014). Educationists have recommended to make education need based for society (Margoum, 2022).

1.4 Effect of mathematics anxiety (MA) on achievement of students

Student's working between nations is important (Suter, 1991). Achievement of secondary school students was negatively affected by mathematics anxiety (Bhatnagar & Saxena, 2000). Student-centered methods are much better than traditional in reducing mathematic anxiety (Emanet, 2021). The teachers having mathematics concern will transmit their nervousness to students (Mangi & Hussain, 2018). Students with unclear concepts, poor results and high mathematics anxiety start avoiding mathematics (Adeyemi, 2015).

1.5 Symptoms of mathematics anxiety

Indicators of mathematics anxiety are; Uneven heartbeat, lack of retention, fade in color, upset appearance, fear of failure, unexpected change in blood pressure, feeling drained, and trembling and avoiding to face and solve problems (Kumari, 2015).

1.6 Damages/ Losses done by of mathematics anxiety

Physical and psychological stresses damaged health and also dropped achievement score in examinations. (Preis & Biggs, 2001). Rigid behavior of teacher cause drop out of the students (Mangi & Hussain, 2018).

1.7 Ways to address/ reduce mathematics anxiety

Mathematics anxiety can affect directly or indirectly (Emanet, 2021). Administration should manage workshops, training sessions and visits to industry to see applications of mathematics in daily life (Gimba, Hassan, Yaki, & Chado, 2018). Mix methods of teaching supported with modern technology can reduce anxiety (Kesici, 2019). Use of new technologies can raise quality of education (Margoum, 2022).

Mathematics anxiety of the students can be addressed by avoiding to call shy students on

board, arranging suitable groups for students, promote hands on activities, practice, use low cost or no cost material (economic/ Cheap), Appreciation (Cohen, Ibrahim & Allen, 2017). Collaborative teaching technique, discussion boards, availability of material or technical sources for rich or poor student, Study trips and meeting with alumni (Mangwende, 2020).

Practice makes a man perfect, so with good motivation regarding mathematics goals student can be fluent if student can make excessive practice of basic mathematics concepts (Sheerazi, 2000). As described by (Forbinger & Fuchs, 2014), "*Fluency is the ability to find an answer quickly and effortlessly, either because the answer is memorized or because the individual has developed an efficient strategy for calculating the answer*" (Forbinger & Fuchs, 2014, p. 54). Use of calculators slows down mathematics fluency among the students (Forbinger & Fuchs, 2014). Clear concepts increase fluency in mathematics. (Forbinger & Fuchs, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

For this study survey method was employed to collect the required data. The quantitative method was a positivistic. (Sinaga, 2022). Fazal used five-point Likert scale form to test math's fear as a study tool and used quantitative technique with multiple regression model for finding the relation of mathematics anxiety and academic performance (Fazal-ur-rehman, 2022).

3.2 Research design

Quantitative method was adopted for the current research study. After literature review tools were adapted i.e. Mathematics anxiety scale and achievement test. These tools were administered by the researcher himself in six districts of Punjab.

Research instruments

Research had two tools i.e. achievement test and mathematics anxiety test. Researcher conducted quantitative study by collecting data from the students. After pilot study and knowing difficulty index of items some items were replaced. For the convenience the tools were translated in urdu also in order to remove language barrier. Data was collected and processed and after analysis, results and conclusions were made. Suitable suggestions were also made on the basis of study for future research.

Tool -01 Mathematics anxiety questionnaire for students

Mathematics anxiety Questionnaire (MAQ) adapted from DIANA K. MAY (2007) under the direction of Shawn and Denise. This tool contained sixteen items related to mathematics anxiety.

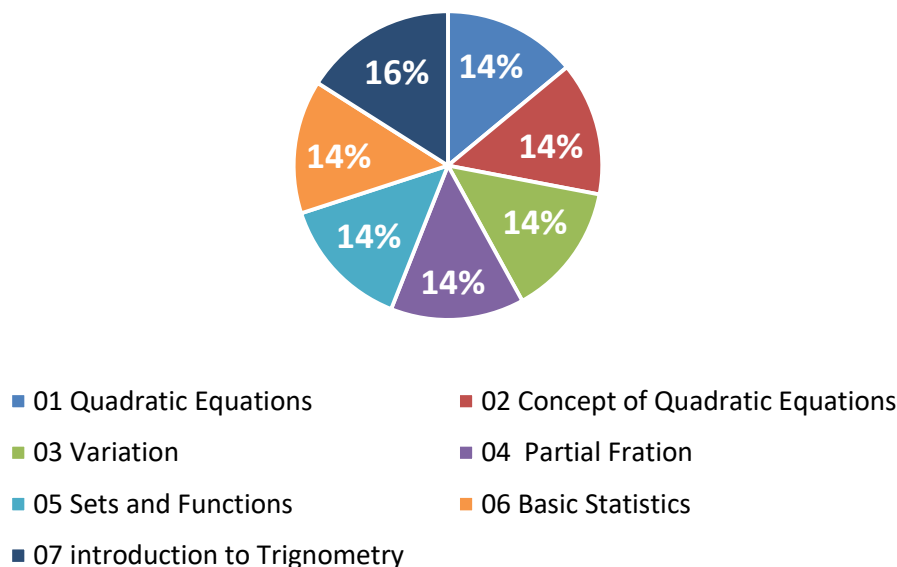
Sr. No.	Factors
1.	: Stress
2.	: Trauma
3.	: Sleep Deprivation
4.	: Medical condition
5.	: Uncertain Changes
6.	: Genetics
7.	: Environment (Naveed, 2016)

TABLE OF SPECIFICATION FOR ACHIEVEMENT TEST 2021

Chapter No.	Name	MCQ's Items in test	Weightage
01	Quadratic Equations	07	14%
02	Concept of Quadratic Equations	07	14%
03	Variation	07	14%
04	Partial Fraction	07	14%
05	Sets and Functions	07	14%
06	Basic Statistics	07	14%

07	Introduction to Trigonometry	08	16%
	Total	50	100%

**Table of Specification for
ACHIEVEMENT TEST Grade 10**



Tool -02 Achievement Test for Students

The achievement test comprised of fifty objective type items, validated from subject specialists and subject experts. Initially seventy items were taken but after pilot study twenty items were excluded from test. This test was administered on students of grade X.

Population

All the 10th class male / female students belonging to public/ private and urban/ rural areas of Punjab were taken as population.

Target Population

Only six districts were considered in target population for study, these 10th class male / female students belonging to public/ private schools with residence of urban/ rural areas of Punjab were taken as target population.

Sr. No.	Board	Students Appeared in 9 th 2019 Exams.		
		Public Schools	Private Schools	Total Students
1.	All Boards total students			11,06,478

Ciss data of Boards

(Iqbal, 2019)

Sample

A sample of one thousand nine hundred twenty students were taken from selected districts studying at secondary level.

Sampling

Research with a sample of 300 students by using multistage cluster random sampling

technique (Khaliq, 2016). From the Target population sample was taken through multistage sampling technique. Whole Punjab was divided into three regions namely Upper Punjab, Lower Punjab and Central Punjab.

2.1 Data Collection

There were 36 districts of Punjab in these three regions. Only two districts are taken from each region through convenient sampling. Then from each district 16 schools, eight from urban area and 08 from rural area, out of these 08 schools 04 were boys' schools and 04 were girls' schools.

Gender wise and public private data collection scheme for rural and urban schools

Urban School students				Rural Schools students				Total Schools
Public		Private		Public		Private		in one District
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
02	02	02	02	02	02	02	02	16

Gender wise scheme of data collection

Total schools in Six Districts = 96

No. of students from each school = 20

No. of students one District = $16 \times 20 = 320$

No. of students in six districts = $320 \times 6 = 1920$

Student wise and public private data collection scheme for rural and urban schools

Urban				Rural				Total Schools
Public		Private		Public		Private		in Six Districts
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	1920

The district's schools were drawn on convenient basis; however, the selection of the students was made based on simple random sampling.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sector/ type wise correlations between mathematics anxiety and achievement

N=1920, Public =960, Private =960

		M		SD		r		Sig.
		Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	
01.	Math. Anxiety	2.54	2.47	.64	0.69	-.15**	-.17**	0.000
02.	Achievement Score	31.67	35.9	11.08	10.65	-.15**	-.17**	0.000

Mathematics anxiety score for public and private schools was significant. Mean anxiety score was dominant in public schools. Achievement score was significant and dominant for the private schools.

Correlations between rural and urban students' mathematics anxiety and achievement

		Mean		S D		r		Sig.
N=1920								
Male =960								
Female =960								
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
01.	Math. Anxiety	2.52	2.49	0.67	0.67	-.19**	-.15**	0.000

02. Achievement Score 33.52 34.08 10.95 11.20 0.000

Mathematics anxiety score for urban and rural schools was significant. Mean anxiety score was dominant in urban schools. Achievement score was significant and dominant for the rural schools.

Gender wise (male and female) students' correlations between mathematics anxiety (MA) and achievement

N(Total)=1920. N(Male) =960, N(Female)=960

Variables	M		SD		r		Sig.
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
01. Math. Anxiety	2.53	2.48	0.71	0.63	-.20**	-.14**	0.000
02. Achievement Score	33.25	34.34	10.24	11.84			0.000

Mathematics anxiety score for male and female schools was significant. Mean anxiety score was dominant in male schools. Achievement score was significant and dominant for the female schools.

Mean score of mathematics anxiety of the students indicated presence of moderate level of anxiety. Highest and lowest anxiety score showed that students included in this study were suffering from mathematics anxiety.

For mathematics anxiety of public and private students' responses both groups shown moderate level of anxiety, but anxiety level of the private school students was less as compared to the public-school Students.

Through one way ANOVA it was known that difference was not significant in all districts except DG Khan and Bahawalpur responses, where difference was significant. Moreover, anxiety level of the D.G. khan students was higher as compared to Bahawalpur students. As difference is significant so results lead to regression analysis.

Comparison of male and female students' achievement showed that there was significant difference between the achievement score of the male and female students. Moreover, the achievement of the female students was high as compared to the male students. There was found no significant difference between achievement score of rural and urban students. However, the achievement of the rural respondents was positive in comparison to urban respondents.

Correlation of math anxiety and achievement for male and female score illustrates that for both groups the correlation was negative, which indicated that achievements of both groups was affected by mathematics anxiety. Although both correlations were weak and negative, yet achievement score of male students showed that mathematics anxiety (MA) had more negative affect on male students.

Correlation of math anxiety and achievement Score of rural and urban illustrates that for both groups the correlation was negative. Although both correlations are weak and negative, yet achievement score of urban students seemed that mathematics anxiety had more negative affect on achievement of the Urban students.

Correlation of math anxiety and achievement score illustrates that for both groups the correlation was negative. Performance of the private students were Better.

Regression analysis between achievement score in mathematics and mathematics anxiety score of the respondents. Results revealed that the mathematics anxiety affected achievement score. Effect of mathematics anxiety on achievement was significant.

2. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that achievement score was less where anxiety was more and vice versa. Anxiety was dominant in male, urban and public sector students. Achievement score was prevailing in female, rural and private students.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended to arrange refresher courses for the teachers, establishment of mathematics labs and regular visits to industrial areas for practical applications of mathematics

1. In future researches work load of mathematics teachers should be analyzed.
2. Text Book content of mathematics book and time of session may be analyzed.

4.1 Delimitation of the Study

Having limited time and resources, the study was delimited to,

1. Only six districts of the province, Punjab, Pakistan.
2. Only students of 10th Class from matric or SSC class.
3. Only students who opted mathematics of science group in matric (Grade X).
4. Maximum 20 Participants from each school were taken, even if school had more than 300 students in 10th grade.

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